Chair of Alaska Republican party 'shocked' Murkowski voted against Kavanaugh confirmation



(KTUU) By Rebecca Palsha

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[WATCH: Sen. Murkowski speaks on the Senate floor]

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R, broke with her party Friday morning in voting against moving ahead with Judge Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation to the U.S. Supreme Court.

She's a methodical thinker, known for giving long quotes, who's not committed to partisan politics.

Murkowski won a historic write-in victory in 2010 when she lost the Republican party primary to Tea Party darling Joe Miller. When she launched the write-in campaign she was supported by a group of Native corporations who banded together, forming the group Alaskans Standing Together.

Asked for statements today about Murkowski's decision the corporations referred Channel 2 to a statement from the Alaska Federation of Natives.

"The Alaska Federation of Natives appreciates Senator Murkowski's commitment to the Alaska Native community. She heard our concerns about Judge Kavanaugh's record on the constitutional rights of Native peoples, and voted accordingly this morning on cloture. AFN will continue to advocate against his confirmation and will work to get other senators to join Senator Murkowski prior to tomorrow's final floor vote."

She also has supported Planned Parenthood and has been lobbied hard recently by women from Alaska who told her stories of sexual abuse back home.

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around the state, and we'll start drafting what our response should be," Babcock said.

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"It was bold, it was courageous," Jessica Cler, the Alaska State Director of Planned Parenthood said. "We were excited to see her decision this morning, very thankful. I think Senator Murkowski listened to thousands of Alaskans who have met with her, who have called her, who have stopped by her office over the past couple of months."

Still, the chair of the Alaska Republican Party, Tuckerman Babcock, says he was "surprised" by Murkowski's decision, saying he heard about it while he was making coffee at 5:30 Friday morning when his phone started ringing.

"It's significant enough that I'm going to convene the whole state central committee, which is about 80 grassroots volunteers

There has been a lot of attention to violence against women, in particular Alaska Native women, recently after the death of 10-yearold Ashley Johnson Barr in Kotzebue. Murkowski has also expressed unease with the sexual assault allegations against Kavanaugh, which he denies.

"I think there are a lot of women and people in the Alaska Native community and people just in our country that are concerned with the issues that have been raised about his past and how he has conducted himself and his temperament," Rep. Tiffany Zulkosky, D-Bethel, said. "And so I think there are enough concerns that this nomination process shouldn't be rushed to conclusion."

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